



KIKA DE LA GARZA PLANT
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**TWO PERENNIAL SOUTH TEXAS FORBS:
ORANGE ZEXMENIA AND PERENNIAL LAZY DAISY**

Native, perennial forbs are commonly used in Texas range plantings, and as ornamentals in both residential and commercial landscaping. Orange zexmenia and perennial lazy daisy are two such forbs that are currently being evaluated at Kika de la Garza Plant Materials Center in Kingsville, Texas. To date, sixteen accessions of orange zexmenia have been germination tested by Plant Materials Center staff. Both transplanted rows and seeded plots are being evaluated for plant survival, plant hardiness, growth characteristics, potential problems, and seed production. Lazy daisy is being germination tested under a variety of light conditions and temperatures to help determine optimum conditions for seed germination. It is also being evaluated in transplanted rows and seeded plots. In addition, Kika de la Garza staff have been exploring different methods of harvesting lazy daisy seed. Based on data and field observations to date, both plants appear to be suitable for range and landscape use.

Orange zexmenia (*Zexmenia hispida*), formerly known as hairy wedelia (*Wedelia hispida*), is a common, native, warm-season, perennial forb. A member of the sunflower (Compositae) family, it grows to 60 centimeters tall blooming from March to December (Jones, 1982). It's shrub-like form, bright yellow-orange flowers, and hardiness in both dry and moist conditions make it an attractive plant for landscape use (Ajilvsge, 1984). In addition, it is easily cultivated, and is often browsed by deer, sheep, and goats (Ajilvsge, 1984).

Orange zexmenia was found to have an average germination rate of 28 percent. It grows well both transplanted and seeded, and it has shown itself to be drought tolerant. It flowers profusely, and produces a good amount of seed in both the spring and the fall. Survival rate for this plant is high. Orange zexmenia appears to be promising, showing value as both a range plant and as a landscape plant.

Aphanostephus riddellii, commonly known as perennial lazy daisy, is another warm-season, perennial forb that is native to south Texas. It has been found to be one of the most highly preferred food sources for white-tailed deer (Arnold & Drawe, 1979; Everitt & Drawe, 1974). In fact, Everitt and Drawe's 1974 study found perennial lazy daisy to be the most preferred spring food source of white-tailed deer, making up more than 12% of their early spring diet. Arnold and Drawe's study in 1979 found perennial lazy daisy to be "the second most heavily preferred species" of white-tailed deer over the course of a year. Also a member of the sunflower

(Compositae) family, it grows to 45 centimeters tall, and it's yellow-disked, white-rayed flowers bloom from February to December (Jones, 1982). It's low, bushy growth form, and profuse flowers make perennial lazy daisy attractive for landscape use.

Initial studies of lazy daisy have revealed a low germination rate (13.5 percent). However, it blooms on and off much of the year, producing a good amount of seed. Although it's survival rate over time has only been fair, it tends to reseed itself, and there are often new plants found nearby. It has shown itself to be somewhat drought tolerant, and is not difficult to establish.

If you are interested in more information about these two native, South Texas forbs, you may contact the Plant Materials Center at (512) 595-1313.

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